

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

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INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

S E C R E T COPENHAGEN 0379

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, DA, PO

SUBJECT: TALK WITH AMBASSADOR DA COSTA VAZ PEREIRA OF PROTUGAL

REF: STATE 028337 AND LISBON 761

1. DURING A TWO-HOUR PRIVATE LUNCHEON AT MY RESIDENCE, THE MARQUES DA COSTA VAZ PEREIRA, THE NEW AMBASSADOR FROM LISBON TO COPENHAGEN, AND I DISCUSSED IN DETAIL THE PROBLEMS WHICH ARE WORRYING HIM AND THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT TODAY. I FOUND THE AMBASSADOR NOT ONLY FRANK AND FRIENDLY ON ALL SUBJECTS BUT EAGER TO PRESENT THE FACTS AS HE AND AS HIS GOVERNMENT SEES THEM. THE TWO VIEWS WERE NOT ALWAYS COMPLETELY IDENTICAL.

2. A VETERAN OF EAST-WEST CONFERENCES AS WELL AS THOROUGHLY FAMILIAR WITH THE NATO SET-UP, THIS 45 YEAR

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OLD RATHER PLUMP BUT HANDSOME PORTUGUESE NOBLEMAN PROCLAIMED HIMSELF A FRIEND OF THE WEST AND A FIRM SUP-

PORTER OF NATO. HE ADDED THAT THE GREAT MAJORITY OF HIS COUNTRYMEN AGREE WITH HIM AND THAT THE RECENT ANTI-NATO RIOTS HAVE BEEN RUN ENTIRELY BY EXTREME LEFTIST OR MAOIST ELEMENTS.

3. HE DREW A DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE MAOISTS AND THE RUSSIAN-ORIENTED COMMUNISTS, THE LATTER LED BY PARTY CHAIRMAN ALVARO CUNHAL, MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO IN THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT. HE POINTED OUT THAT THE LATTER WANTS TO WORK NOW WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT WHICH HE SEEMS TO THINK HE CAN EVENTUALLY DOMINATE, WHILE THE MAOISTS BELIEVE THE SOLUTION LIES FIRST IN CHAOS.

4. ASKED ABOUT THE POLITICAL VIEWS OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT, HE SAID THAT EVERYONE IS AWARE OF THE ANTI-COMMUNIST STAND OF PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES AND FOREIGN MINISTER SOARES BUT HE HAS DOUBTS ABOUT THAT OF PRIME MINISTER VASCO GONCALVES.

5. QUESTIONED ON THE ELECTIONS SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 12, HE SAID THAT THE MAJORITY OF THE MILITARY WANT THEM AND THAT HE BELIEVES THEY WILL BE HELD NO MATTER HOW MUCH TROUBLE THE COMMUNISTS OF BOTH WINGS CAUSE IN THE MEANTIME. HE PREDICTED THAT THEY WILL SHOW THE FAR LEFT CONTROLS LESS THAN TEN PERCENT OF THE ELECTORATE.

6. ASKED ABOUT WHAT PART GENERAL SPINOLA, WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE REVOLUTION IN THE FIRST PLACE, PLAYS TODAY IN PORTUGUESE POLITICS, HE REPLIED THAT THE GENERAL STILL COUNTS, ESPECIALLY WITH HIGH-RANKING ARMY OFFICERS, AND IN THE EVENT OF A CRISIS COULD BE COUNTED ON TO TAKE ACTION.

7. SPEAKING OF PORTUGUESE DIPLOMATS, HE SAID THAT MOST OF THEM HAVE BEEN SHIFTED, AS HIS PREDECESSOR HERE WAS, BUT THAT AMBASSADOR HALL-THEMIDO, THE PORTUGUESE AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON, WILL BE KEPT ON BECAUSE THE REGIME BELIEVES HE WILL EXPLAIN THEIR OBJECTIVES SATISFACTORILY.

8. ASKED IF THE DANISH GOVERNMENT HAS SO FAR OFFERED AID
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IN THE FORM OF ECONOMIC OR TECHNOLOGICAL AID, HE REPLIED THAT TO THE BEST OF HIS KNOWLEDGE THEY HAVE ONLY SENT SOME JOURNALISTS TO REPORT WHAT IS HAPPENING.

9. I TOLD THE AMBASSADOR THAT MY COUNTRY IS WILLING TO HELP PORTUGAL TO MAINTAIN A DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT AND PLANS TO PRESS AHEAD WITH AN AID PROGRAM. I MENTIONED THE CONCERN OF MANY MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, INCLUDING SENATOR KENNEDY'S RECENT SPEECH ON THIS SUBJECT.

10. IN THE ABOVE CONTEXT I INQUIRED AS TO WHY THE SUGGESTION OF SECRETARY GENERAL VAN LENNEP OF THE OECD TO ESTABLISH AN AD HOC WORKING PARTY TO COORDINATE ASSISTANCE TO PORTUGAL WITH THAT ORGANIZATION HAS NOT BEEN ANSWERED. THE AMBASSADOR SAID HE WOULD LOOK INTO IT IMMEDIATELY.

11. COMMENT: DESPITE A BRAVE FRONT I THINK THAT AMBASSADOR VAZ PEREIRA IS VERY WORRIED ABOUT HIS COUNTRY AND THE ABILITY OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT TO CONTAIN THE EXCESSES OF HIS COUNTRY'S LEFT WING POLITICAL PARTIES. HE DOES NOT TRUST THE PRIME MINISTER OR MINISTER CUNHAL.
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